



BLUE EARTH COUNTY

COMMUNICATOR

Effectively & Efficiently Delivering Essential Services

SPRING & SUMMER 2014



Reconstruction Resumes on County Road 17

Construction work will soon be underway on the second phase of County Road 17 between Mankato and Eagle Lake. Phase I was completed last fall with a new urban section added within the City of Eagle Lake and roundabouts constructed at the County Road 56 and County Road 12 intersections. Phase II of the project will include a four-lane section of highway between Mankato and County Road 12, a two-lane segment between County Road 12 and County Road 56 and construction of two roundabouts at Carver Road and County Road 86.

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THE COMMUNICATOR

The Blue Earth County Communicator is published biannually to increase public awareness and involvement in county government.



For more information about the publication, or to submit questions and/or comments, contact:

Communications Office
Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
204 S. 5th St., Mankato, MN 56001

Phone 304-4491 – Fax 304-4344
info@blueearthcountymn.gov



**Award-Winning
Publication**

by the National
Association of County
Information Officers

Visit the Redesigned License Center



WHAT'S NEW

The Blue Earth County License Center recently underwent a redesign to create a more efficient workflow for staff in serving the public. The new design provides more counter space for staff and an open environment for the public.

License Center hours are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is located in the lower level of the Blue Earth County Government Center at 410 S. 5th Street in Mankato.

Available services and information at the License Center include:

- Elections and Voter Information
- Candidate Information
- Official Filing Documents
- Motor Vehicle Licensing and Registration
- Drivers Licenses
- Fishing and Hunting Licenses
- Birth, Death and Marriage Certificates/ Licenses



License center staff utilize the newly redesigned space to serve the public more efficiently.

Household Hazardous Waste & Product Reuse Facility Now Open for the 2014 Season

By Jean Lundquist, Recycling Coordinator

The Blue Earth County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility and Product Re-use Center recently opened for the 2014 season. The facility is located at 651 Summit Ave., Mankato and is open every Tuesday afternoon from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. and the second Saturday of each month from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. through the end of October.

The Facility accepts hazardous wastes from households in Blue Earth, Nicollet and LeSueur Counties at no charge, plus farm chemicals from Blue Earth County farmers. Products should be in their original containers, if possible, with labels attached.

Examples of items accepted include paints, stains, household cleaners, automotive products and yard and garden chemicals.

New this year, the Facility will accept used cooking oils. Though it's not hazardous, it is a difficult item for residents to dispose of.

Adjacent to the HHW Facility is the Product Reuse Center which contains items that have been dropped off by others that are believed to be in good, usable form and are available for others to take and use for free of charge. ■

Blue Earth County

HHW

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE & PRODUCT REUSE FACILITY

651 Summit Avenue, Mankato

24-Hour Waste & Recycling Hotline—507-304-4242 or visit our website at www.blueearthcountymn.gov

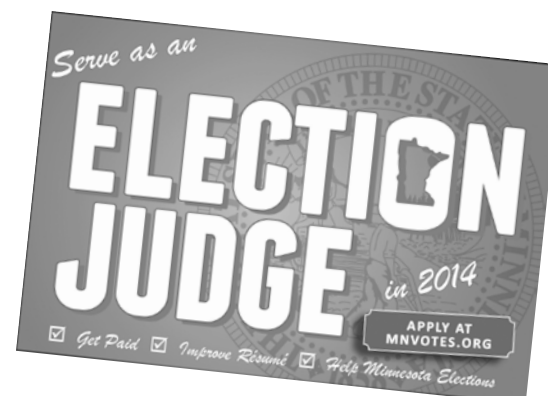
2014 HOURS April-October							APRIL							MAY							JUNE							
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
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27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31		

Interested in Becoming an Election Judge for the 2014 Election?

Election judges are responsible for the administration of election procedures in the voting place. Election judges help to guarantee that the rights of voters are protected on Election Day. Duties include:

- Opening and closing the polls (judges work from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. or later)
- Being responsible for all election materials
- Ensuring only qualified voters are permitted to vote only once
- Distributing ballots
- Helping voters requiring assistance
- Maintaining order in the voting place throughout the day
- Registering new voters at the polling site

- Processing absentee ballots
- Obtaining the results after the polls are closed
- Certifying the precinct election results



For more information or online application materials visit www.mnvotes.org or call 304-4341

Take Advantage of New Online Voter Registration!



Did You Receive Your Tax Statement & Valuation Notice? Check Your Mail...

By Michael Stalberger, County Assessor

Blue Earth County property owners recently received tax statements and valuation notices by mail. In a continuing effort to best use County tax dollars, the notices and statements were mailed together totaling approximately 32,000 pieces of mail.

Taxpayers are reminded to watch for due dates on each individual statement, as different types of property may have different payment deadlines. The first tax payment deadline for all property is May 15.

It is also important to note that values associated with taxes due for 2014 were set in 2013 and can only be appealed in tax court now through April 30, 2014. Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services Department mails this important information as part of the multi-year assessment and taxation process in Minnesota.

To better provide payment options for taxpayers, an automated payment program is now available to property owners for making tax payments.

In addition to the automated payment option, property taxes may also be paid online at www.blueearthcountymn.gov, by mail, at designated drop box locations and in person at the Historic Courthouse located at 204 S. 5th Street in Mankato. ■

For more information on tax statements, valuation notices or the new automatic payment program please contact Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services by phone at 304-4251 or by e-mail at taxhelp@blueearthcountymn.gov.



REMINDER
FIRST HALF PROPERTY
TAXES ARE DUE MAY 15, 2014



Automatic Payments for Property Taxes Now Available

Blue Earth County property owners now have the option to sign-up for an automatic payment program for making property tax payments. The new payment service is free, dependable and convenient. Enrollment forms were included in the 2014 Property Tax Statement mailing sent March 31. Those interested in taking advantage of the service can find an enrollment form with more information at

www.blueearthcountymn.gov/achform.

The automated payment program works by debiting the current tax installment from a subscriber's checking or savings account. Debits take place on property tax due dates which include May 15 and October 15 for real property (May 15 and November 15 for agricultural classification) and August 31 and November 15 for manufactured homes. ■

**Roundabouts Are As
Easy As 1 2 3** 

Take it Slow

Pick Your Lane

**Yield to the Left or
Stop if Necessary**

**In the Roundabout
Don't Stop, Pass or Change Lanes**

Are You Roundabout Ready?

Highway 22, Mankato, MN
www.roundaboutready.com

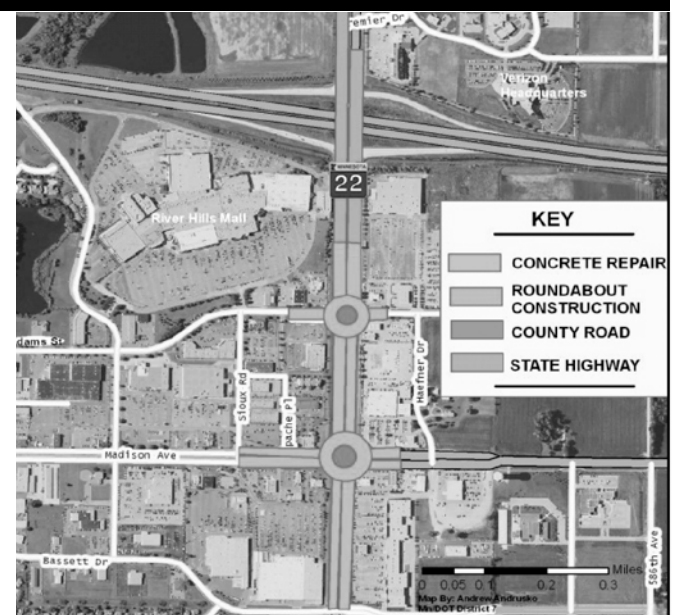


Highway 22 Mankato Roundabouts Are Coming Detours begin June 2014

Multi-lane roundabouts are planned for the Highway 22 intersections with Madison Avenue and Adams Street in the retail area of Mankato in 2014. The project also includes the installation of flashing yellow arrows for left-turn signals at other Highway 22 intersections.

This project will benefit Mankato residents and businesses in several ways:

- Roundabouts will improve safety by reducing the chances of serious injury/fatal crashes
- Roundabouts will significantly reduce current and future user delays
- Flashing yellow arrow displays (shown to be the most understood display for permitted left turns) will increase capacity and reduce delays



For more information visit roundaboutready.com.



Dust Control Notice



PUBLIC WORKS

The Blue Earth County Highway Department will be applying calcium chloride to gravel roads throughout the County for dust control this summer. Residents will be able to purchase a set of two applications; one to be applied in late May and the other in early August (weather permitting). Standard applications for \$125 include an area of 100-ft in length by a 20-ft wide surface area.

No guarantee is made for the performance of the material. However, the material has been used in previous years with good success.

Requests and payments can be mailed to Blue Earth County Highway Department, PO Box 3083, Mankato, MN 56002-3083. Please state the number of feet requested, location (County road number or section and township) and a telephone number.

Applications will not be made unless payment is received by May 15, 2014.

To obtain further details on pricing or to request the service, please contact the Blue Earth County Highway Department at 304-4025.



South Central MN Safety Camp

Youth entering grades 4-7 are eligible to attend this special camp that promotes safety awareness through active and hands-on learning experiences.

WHEN:
Monday, June 23, 2014 from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

WHERE:
North Mankato Fire Station # 2
1825 Howard Drive in North Mankato.

Space is limited and pre-registration is required by June 12. Please call 304-4142 for further details.

Planning for Future Roads Projects

By Alan Forsberg, County Engineer

The development of major road projects typically takes several years of planning followed by time for actual construction. Blue Earth County utilizes a five-year strategic planning process to prioritize work plans based on research, area transportation studies, public input and board approval. Projects in the preliminary planning stages include:

County Road 12 from County Road 17 to Highway 83.

This project would include the last stage of a multi-stage project to connect County Road 12 from the Mankato Airport to Highway 83 on the East edge of Mankato. It is identified in the Mankato Area Transportation and Planning Study (MATAPS) that defines the region's vision for the future of its transportation system. Overall, the project

would facilitate and encourage planned economic development, relieve traffic on Highway 22 and provide a missing link in the regional transportation system. Environmental documents are currently being prepared and construction funding is being sought.

County Road 1 from Good Thunder to Highway 30.

A public open house to show and obtain feedback on preliminary project plans is scheduled for Tuesday, April 29 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. with a short program at 6 p.m. at the Blue Earth County Public Works Department located at 35 Map Drive in Mankato. The project would replace deteriorated pipes and bridges, replace aged pavement and make needed safety improvements to the stretch of road.



Potential turnback of Highway 66 from MnDOT to Blue Earth County.

Conceptual plans are being developed to assist the County Board in determining if it would be in the County's interest to accept transfer of this road from MnDot to Blue Earth County. Meetings with significantly affected landowners adjacent to the road are being scheduled in addition to a public open house planned for Monday, May 5 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. with a brief presentation at 6 p.m. at the Blue Earth County Public Works Department located at 35 Map Drive in Mankato. Transfer of the road would include sufficient State funds to reconstruct the road for placement on the County State Aid System to provide for future maintenance costs.

For more information on road projects please contact the Blue Earth County Highway Department at 304-4025.

Summer Activities At Blue Earth County Parks!

Reserve a Campsite Online at blueearthcountymn.gov

PARKS	ACTIVITIES																			
	Tent Camping Sites	Mobile Camping Sites	Electrical Hook-ups	Bathhouse	Boat/Canoe Launch	Canoe Rental	Drinking Water	Dump Station	Fire Rings/Grills	Fishing	Fishing Dock	Horseshoe Pits	Interpretive Center/Log Cabin	Nature Trail	Paddleboat Rental	Picnic Shelters	Picnic Tables	Playground	Primitive Restrooms	Resident Caretakers
BRAY (102.3 ACRES)	10	33	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
DALY (92.41 ACRES)	15	71	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
DUCK LAKE (31.66 ACRES)				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
LAKE GEORGE (4.2 ACRES)					•				•	•	•					•	•	•	•	•
RAPIDAN (38.69 ACRES)	20				•		•		•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
RED JACKET TRAIL PARK (4 ACRES)					•		•		•	•				•	•	•				
WILLIAMS NATURE CENTER (65 ACRES)							•						•	•					•	
INDIAN LAKE (120 ACRES)														•						
SCHIMEK (30 ACRES)									•	•				•		•	•			
WILDWOOD (28 ACRES)										•										
EAGLE LAKE (1 ACRE)					•					•								•		
LONE PINE (1.4 ACRES)					•					•										
HUNGRY HOLLOW STOP (4.2 ACRES)					•				•							•				
WATONWAN STOP (7 ACRES)					•				•	•						•	•			

CAMPING RESERVATIONS: Camping reservation systems are available at Bray and Daly Parks. Reservations are taken by phone, online or in person at the park for which the reservation is requested. Park personnel will take reservations from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday. A deposit is required to hold each camping site.

Daly Park:
11056 571st Lane
Mapleton, MN 56065
524-3000

Bray Park:
2214 Oriole Rd.
Madison Lake, MN 56063
243-3885



2014 Construction Season Major Projects

By Alan Forsberg, County Engineer

County Road 17 Reconstruction from Mankato to Eagle Lake Update

County Road 17, an extension of Madison Avenue in Mankato and formerly Highway 14, will undergo the next phase of reconstruction during the 2014 construction season. Once fully completed, the new road will feature a four-lane divided roadway from Mankato to County Road 12. From the County Road 12 intersection, the road will be two-lane with added turning lanes through the City of Eagle Lake. Additionally, a pedestrian trail will run

along the north side of the road from Eagle Lake to Mankato. Part of the project will also include four roundabout intersections at Carver Road, County Road 12, County Road 86 and County Road 56.

The first phase of work on County Road 17 including the reconstruction of the road in Eagle Lake (Parkway Ave.) and two roundabouts at County Road 12 and County Road 56 were completed in 2013.

The Carver Road Roundabout is on an accelerated construction schedule this spring and is planned to be available in June 2014 as a detour for northbound traffic when MnDOT constructs the Highway 22 roundabout intersections in Mankato.

Reconstruction of County Road 17 will provide a modern, safe link for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists traveling from Eagle Lake to Mankato. It will also facilitate and encourage planned economic growth for the area.

Funding for the project primarily came from State highway turnback funds that were obtained when the road transitioned from being a State Highway to part of the County State Aid Highway System. Blue Earth County, the City of Eagle Lake and the City of Mankato also supplemented dollars towards the overall project. ■



County Road 147 bridge near Amboy.

Rural Bridge Projects

Blue Earth County is credited with having more miles of river than any other county in the State. In total, the County system includes about 125 bridges. Blue Earth County also performs bridge safety inspections and assists with construction for an additional 75 Township and City bridges.

Most bridges have a life cycle of around 75 years, which equates to at least 2 to 3 bridges needing to be replaced per year. Unfortunately, some of the timber bridges and early design pre-cast bridge shapes are only lasting about 50 years.

Blue Earth County has an aggressive bridge maintenance and replacement program using all available State and Federal funds which contributes to the County having only a 5 percent deficient bridge rate according to State standards.

Throughout the 2014 construction season, the County is planning to contract for the replacement of farm to market bridges on County Road 14 (funded) and County Road 147 (requires the Legislature to authorize additional bridge bonding funds). Additionally, construction of a farm to market bridge in Ceresco Township is expected to begin this spring and be completed prior to fall harvest. ■

County Road 26 Improvements



Main Street in Madison Lake

Blue Earth County in cooperation with the City of Madison Lake will reconstruct Main Street in Madison Lake, known as County Road 26, throughout the 2014 construction season. This will also include a section of Cherry Street which connects Main Street to County Road 187. The project will provide new infrastructure for downtown Madison Lake by replacing the old and deteriorated street, sidewalk, water main, sanitary sewer and storm sewer. Other enhancements will include streetscape aesthetic improvements such as trees and decorative light fixtures that are planned to serve Madison Lake well into the future.



North Shore of Eagle Lake Segment

County Road 26 from County Road 12 to Madison Lake was reconstructed a few years ago to meet modern safe rural highway standards, with the exception of one segment adjacent to the North shore of Eagle Lake. Reconstruction of the segment, known for its dangerous sharp curves was put on hold as permitting from the Minnesota DNR was required. Construction on the segment of roadway is expected to start mid-summer with completion in fall. Improvements to the public access of Eagle Lake and to the wayside park are planned for 2015.

Medicine Collection Program Expands



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Blue Earth County initiated a Medicine Collection Program in 2011 with a drop box location site at the Justice Center to allow proper disposal of medications as a mechanism to protect drinking water and prevent abuse or misuse of leftover medications. In 2013, the program was expanded through a partnership with the City of Mankato to add a second drop box location at the Public Safety Center in downtown Mankato. Collection totals nearly doubled in 2013 with a total of 2,664 pounds of medicine collected between the two sites, compared to 1,700 pounds collected in 2012.

Residents are reminded of the free service and that medications may be dropped off anonymously Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at the Sheriff's Office Lobby at the Blue Earth County Justice Center located at 401 Carver Road, Mankato, or 24-hours a day seven days a week at the Mankato Public Safety Center at 710 S. Front Street, Mankato.

Accepted items include; prescription medications, over-the counter medications, narcotics and other controlled substances, medication samples, pet medications, vitamins and supplements, liquid medication in glass or leak-proof containers (please put in an additional plastic bag), medicated ointments and lotions, inhalers and street drugs.

Non-accepted items include; mercury thermometers, sharps, IV bags, infectious waste, hydrogen peroxide and business medicines.

Sharps including needles, syringes, lancets and similar medical devices need to be disposed of through the Home Sharps Disposal Program with collection sites at Hy-Vee Pharmacies in Mankato. Improper disposal of sharps can be potentially dangerous and possibly cause those handling the waste to be poked by used needles.

Xcel Energy is an important partner that incinerates items securely brought by law enforcement to its Wilmarth Plant.

For more information about the Medicine Collection Program visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov or call 304-4440.



Planning & Zoning Information

By George Leary, County Zoning Administrator

Does My Project Require A Construction Permit?

Blue Earth County Planning and Zoning issues construction permits for projects in all rural areas of the county with the exception of municipalities, Lime Township and Mankato Township. The City of Mankato issues permits for Lime Township, and Mankato Township does their own zoning.

In general, proposed projects for structures or additions with a footprint greater than or equal to 120 square feet require a construction permit. Although smaller projects may not require a construction permit, the setback requirements of the County still apply. Modifications within an existing home that involve replacing a basement or converting existing living space into a bedroom also requires a permit. In those areas that are under the jurisdiction of the county, simple projects such as replacing siding, roofing,

windows and doors do not require a permit. Other jurisdictions may require a permit for these projects. Please check with your local zoning authority for applicable permit requirements.

In situations where construction has commenced without a permit, a double permit fee is assessed. Unfortunately these situations may include setback issues that lead to after-the-fact variance requests which are also charged a double fee and have the possibility of being denied by the County Board of Adjustment. Some after-the-fact permit requests may involve activities that are prohibited within the zoning district involved. In all cases it is best to contact the County Planning and Zoning office during the initial planning phase of your project to see what permits and setback requirements may be involved with your proposal. ■

For more information, please contact Blue Earth County Planning and Zoning at 304-4381.



Shoreland Alterations and Working Within Bluff Impact Zones

Shoreland property owners and developers particularly along lake and stream banks are reminded to contact Blue Earth County Environmental Services for guidance on rules and regulations before proceeding with land alterations or removal of live vegetation. Summer is a key time for construction and outdoor projects and land owners need to be mindful of specific regulations for shoreland areas before eliminating vegetation such as trees, shrubs and plants. Vegetation is important to help reduce the erosive effects of rainfall striking unprotected soil,

diminish the flow of surface runoff and lessen the amount of slope failure. Native vegetation also protects water quality and wildlife habitat through the growth of native plant species.

Bluff lands can also be quite fragile. The county considers slopes greater than or equal to 30 percent with a change in elevation of 15 feet or more as a bluff. Adding structures, impervious surface or removing trees or shrubs in bluff areas can have a significant impact on the stability of a bluff. In some instances a wetland or water body may

be located at the bottom which can be affected by an eroding bluff. To protect the integrity of a bluff, the County ordinance does place restrictions on land use activities and the removal of trees and shrubs within bluff zones. Please contact Blue Earth County Planning and Zoning prior to moving forward with projects in shoreland areas or bluff zones.

For a complete listing of Blue Earth County ordinances, including specific shoreland and bluff regulations, please visit; www.blueearthcountymn.gov/ordinances. ■

For more information, please contact Blue Earth County Environmental Services at 304-4381.

Learn the Facts about Recycling

By Jean Lundquist, Recycling Coordinator

Recycling Myths

Question: Most recycling is just thrown in the trash anyway, right?

Answer: Minnesota State law requires all materials collected as recycling to be recycled. It is against the law for anyone to throw a bag of recycling in the trash.

Question: Aren't products made with recycled materials of lesser quality?

Answer: From paper to plastic to glass to metal, there is no difference in the quality of materials made with recycled content.

Recycling Facts

Paper

- The average American uses seven trees every year for paper, wood, and other products made from trees.
- For every ton of newspaper we recycle, we save 17 trees. In 2013, Blue Earth County recycled 20,725 tons of paper, and saved 352,325 trees.
- The average family throws away 13,000 pieces of paper each year. Most is packaging and junk mail.

Plastic

- Americans use 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour. Most are thrown in the trash.
- Every year we make enough plastic film to shrink-wrap Texas.
- Every year, Americans throw away 25 billion Styrofoam® cups, or enough to circle the world 436 times. They are not recyclable.

Metal

- Recycling aluminum saves 95 percent of the energy it takes to make the material from scratch.
- There is no limit to the number of times aluminum can be recycled.
- At one time, aluminum was more valuable than gold.

Glass

- Most glass bottles and jars contain at least 25 percent recycled content.

Question: Is it true no one wants the recyclables we already collect anyway?

Answer: Markets are strong for paper, metal, and plastics. In fact, many paper mills can't get enough of the recycled materials they need to make new paper.



- Window pane glass, Pyrex®, mirrors and other types of glass that are not bottles and jars are made with a different process, and cannot be recycled together.
- Glass never wears out. It can be recycled forever.

General

- Every year, Minnesotans throw \$312 million dollars worth of recyclables into landfills.
- For every \$10 we spend for food, \$1 is to pay for packaging that we throw away.
- Exchanging one incandescent light bulb for a compact fluorescent light (CFL) will create half a ton less greenhouse gases. The CFL will also burn for up to 10,000 hours, rather than 750 hours, and last up to ten years. ■

Affordable Rain Barrels & Compost Bins Available

Blue Earth County is partnering with the Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM) to offer residents affordable rain barrels and compost bins through a special program in selected communities throughout the State. Those interested in ordering a discounted rain barrel for \$69 or a compost bin for \$55 may visit www.RecycleMinnesota.org to learn more information or to place an order. All orders must be made online and be picked up at a special distribution event taking place on May 16, 2014 at the Blue Earth County Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

Now is a great time to get a jump start on gardening plans and water conservation efforts. Some of the many economic and environmental benefits to using rain barrels and compost bins include:

- **Saving Money and Resources.**

Rain barrels help conserve water by using rain water rather than fresh water that saves both resources and dollars on water bills.

- **Stormwater Management.**

Using rain barrels can help property owners with stormwater management and controlling runoff, which can contribute to polluting waterways.

- **Reducing Waste.**

Utilizing a compost bin can reduce more than 25 percent of household waste from going to a landfill, also saving money.

All rain barrels and compost bins are made from recycled content and come with a 10-year warranty. Rates offered for this special promotion through RAM offer a fifty percent savings off regular prices, making it affordable for residents to take advantage of the benefits of both type of products. ■

Several rain barrel and compost bin distribution events have been scheduled throughout Minnesota in addition to this local event. For more information visit www.recycleminnesota.org.



For more information, please visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov or call the Waste & Recycling Hotline at 304-4242.



Bookmark Contest Returns



LIBRARY SERVICES



The Blue Earth County Library System Bookmark Contest returned in 2014 through a cooperative effort with Twin Rivers Center for the Arts and Paragon Printing and Mailing.

First, Second and Third Place winners were selected within six categories including a new category for adults based on the contest theme of “My Hometown”. First place winning entries will be professionally printed and distributed at all Blue Earth County Library locations.

Visit www.beclibrary.org for a complete list of winners.

www.beclibrary.org



Library Supporters

The Blue Earth County Library thanks all the generous sponsors to the libraries in Mankato, Lake Crystal and Mapleton Communities. To view a listing of individual and organization sponsors or to learn more about supporting the Blue Earth County Library, visit <http://www.beclibrary.org/supporters>



New Legal Reference Materials Added to Library Collection Through Law Library Funds

By Jessica Beyer, Communications Manager & Business Analyst

The Blue Earth County Library System recently received \$6,000 in grant funds from the Blue Earth County Law Library Board to purchase new legal reference materials. The funding provided 42 new legal reference titles to the existing collection of 418 materials at the Blue Earth County Library in Mankato. New materials include a variety of titles to help individuals with legal topics ranging from estate planning to everyday law topics for individuals, families, renters, homeowners and business owners. Part of the legal reference section of the Blue Earth County Library in Mankato includes computer stations for patrons to search online legal reference materials.

The Blue Earth County Law Library Board is responsible for managing the Law Library located at the Blue Earth County Justice Center on second floor near Court Administration. The law library is open to the public for free legal resources Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and includes computer terminals with subscription access to the legal research site Westlaw. The former Law Library located in the Historic Courthouse housed several

volumes of legal books. However, the modern Law Library mainly houses computer terminals and only a limited number of published legal volumes.

“The Blue Earth County Law Library Board is pleased to be able to provide \$6,000 in funding to the Blue Earth County Library System for the expansion of law reference materials to its patrons,” stated Ross Arneson, Blue Earth County Attorney. “A goal of the Law Library Board is to provide resources outside of the Law Library located in the Justice Center for use by the general public and we are excited for this contribution to help toward those efforts.”

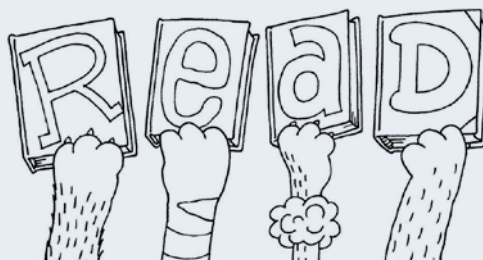
The Blue Earth County Law Library is funded by “law library fees” from civil and criminal court cases. Current Board members for the Law Library include; Judge Bradley Walker; Scott Cutcher, Public Defender; Ryan Magnus, Attorney; Will Purvis, County Commissioner; Ross Arneson, County Attorney and Kelly Iverson, Court Administrator who is an ex officio member that oversees law library funds and provides assistance to the public. ■

For more information on legal materials available within the Blue Earth County Library System visit www.beclibrary.org.

2014 Summer Reading “PAWS TO READ”

The Blue Earth County Library System’s 2014 Summer Reading Program, “Paws to Read,” kicks off with sign-up beginning June 2 and programs starting June 10 for youth of all ages. Prizes can be earned for time spent reading in four age categories; 0 to 3, 4 to 8, 9 to 12 and 13 to 17. In addition to the reading incentives, the Mankato library will host fun, educational programs on all Tuesdays from June 10 through July 31 and other days as scheduled. Program schedules vary in Lake Crystal and Mapleton.

New this year will be a Program Finale Carnival held on July 31 for all participants with special activities such as prize distribution, participants helping paint a mural, airbrush tattoos, face-painting and carnival themed refreshments.



For further details contact the Blue Earth County Library at 304-4020 or visit www.beclibrary.org for online registration information.

Sign-up begins June 2

BRAND-NEW PROGRAMS

Carol McCormick’s Tales with Tails
The Zinghoppers
Discover Deep Valley Bus Tour
The Oldenburg Brothers
Spins and Strings Yo-Yo Performance
Grand Finale Carnival

OTHERS BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

Paul Bunyan’s Loggin,
Legends and Lore with David Ward
Mad Science of Iowa
Minnesota Zoomobile
The RAD Zoo
And Many More!

The 2014 Summer Reading Program is made possible through the generosity of many local sponsors including primary sponsorship by Taylor Corporation.



Take Part in Severe Weather Awareness Week April 21-25, 2014

Minnesota Severe Weather Awareness Week is April 21-25, 2014 with two statewide tornado drills on Thursday, April 24, at 1:45 p.m. and 6:55 p.m. The annual public event is designed to remind individuals, families, businesses, schools and institutions that it's essential to plan ahead for Minnesota's severe spring/summer weather.

Individuals and families can take action to make sure they have what they need in their emergency disaster kit and refresh their memory with the definitions of Warnings and Watches.

When severe weather strikes you often have only a few minutes to respond and seek shelter. It is essential for you and your family to be prepared in an emergency. Blue Earth County Emergency Management recommends that everyone become familiar with the type of weather they may encounter at different times of the year, prepare an emergency disaster kit and practice their emergency plan frequently.



Many people do not understand the difference between a watch and a warning. When conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop, a severe thunderstorm or tornado WATCH is issued. Information from weather radar, spotters and other sources is used to issue severe thunderstorm and tornado WARNINGS for areas where severe weather is imminent.

Severe weather warnings are passed to local radio and television stations and broadcast over weather alert radios. These warnings are also relayed to local emergency management and public safety officials who then activate the local warning systems to alert communities.

Blue Earth County Emergency Management recommends assembling an emergency disaster kit in advance and placing it in your shelter area. ■

Consider including the following items in your emergency disaster kit:

- Non-perishable food items and water
- Manual can opener if your kit contains canned food
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Change of clothing for each family member
- Extra hard-soled shoes for each family member
- Extra bike or sports helmets
- First-aid kit
- Prescription medications
- Flashlight and batteries
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities, if necessary
- NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) weather radio
- Set of car and house keys
- Whistle to signal for help
- Identification and a credit card or cash
- Any specific items you may need for children such as diapers or formula
- Extra collars and leashes, food, water and necessary supplies for your pets; for smaller animals, a crate or cage to help keep them safe and close

Additional supplies and equipment may be necessary for family members with disabilities or medical conditions.

PARTICIPATE IN SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK WITH TWO STATEWIDE TORNADO DRILLS ON THURSDAY, APRIL 24, AT 1:45 P.M. AND 6:55 P.M.

Type of Notice	What It Means	You Should...
Hazardous Weather Outlook	Will there be severe thunderstorms or tornadoes today or tonight, or several days from now?	If severe weather is expected, check back for later forecasts, information and possible watches.
Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm Watch	There's a good chance of large hail, damaging winds, and maybe even a tornado in the watch area within the next few hours.	If the watch includes your county, or one close to you, you should really start to pay attention to what's going on. If there are storms nearby, check your weather source to see if there are warnings.
Severe Thunderstorm Warning	A storm with large damaging hail and/or damaging winds has been seen, or indicated on radar.	Listen closely to the warning - it will tell you what exactly to expect (hail size and wind speed).
Tornado Warning	A tornado has either been seen, or there are signs on radar that a tornado could be forming.	If you're in the warning area, NOW is the time to put your safety plan into action.

IMPORTANT SAFETY TIPS WHILE AWAY FROM HOME IN SEVERE WEATHER

GET IN: Put as many walls between you and the outside as possible.

GET DOWN: If you can't get underground, get as low as possible.

COVER UP: Use whatever you have to protect your head and body from flying objects.

IF A TORNADO THREATENS, YOU SHOULD NOT LEAVE IN YOUR CAR!

BEING IN A STURDY BUILDING IS MOST LIKELY SAFER THAN BEING IN YOUR VEHICLE ON THE ROAD IF A TORNADO HITS.

STAY CALM AND TRY TO FIND A SAFE SHELTER WHEREVER YOU ARE.

Affordable Public Housing



HUMAN SERVICES

Affordable public housing applications for three-bedroom apartments are being accepted by the city of Mankato and Blue Earth County Economic Development Authority.

To qualify, families generally need to have at least three children, or two children who are opposite genders and be income eligible. Qualified applicants pay 30 percent of their income for rent. Landlord references are required and a criminal background check must be passed.

For an application, or more information, contact staff at 387-8612.



Help Feed Blue Earth County



Take part in the Letter Carriers' Food Drive throughout Blue Earth County
Saturday, May 10, 2014

Help stamp out hunger by putting non-perishable food donations in a bag by your mailbox or leave it at your local post office. Letter carriers will deliver it to a local food bank.

For more information contact your local post office.



Blue Earth County in Planning Stages for Use of Statewide Health Improvement Program Grant

By Kristen Friedrichs, SHIP Coordinator

Blue Earth County was awarded a Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) grant through the Minnesota Department of Health in November. The focus of SHIP is to prevent chronic disease and save health care dollars by building stronger communities through changes in policy, systems and environment that encourage healthy eating, active living, and reduced tobacco use/exposure. SHIP activities are focused on making these changes in the following settings; schools, communities, day cares, housing, worksites, community service providers and health care providers. Simplified, the goal is to make healthy living easier.

SHIP is one of Minnesota's health care reform initiatives and was started four years ago. SHIP initiatives were instrumental during those years in making Minnesota State University, Mankato a smoke-free campus, starting the Rosa Parks Elementary Walking School Bus, implementing the Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training (S.M.A.R.T.) curriculum in nine area schools

and in establishing/enhancing work-site wellness efforts at nine area worksites. Funding was reduced by 70 percent in 2012, and Blue Earth County was not a funded county; however, the 2013 legislative session reinstated the original program statewide. Blue Earth County was awarded a planning grant in November 2013 to help build SHIP-related infrastructure. The implementation phase of SHIP strategies will begin in July 2014.

During the seven month planning phase, a SHIP Coordinator was hired and a Community Leadership Team was convened. This team is helping to identify potential strategies to improve the health of Blue Earth County residents. They will assist in identifying community partners to implement those strategies.

A mini-grant process will provide community organizations the opportunity to partner with Blue Earth County in this work. Mini-grant applications will be used to help develop a proposal for the implementation phase to begin in July 2014. ■

For more information contact Kristen Friedrichs, SHIP Coordinator at 304-4411.

Advantages of VA Home Loans for Veterans

Loan Advantages

The guarantee VA provides to lenders allows them to provide more favorable terms, including:

- No down payment as long as the sales price doesn't exceed the appraised value.
 - No private mortgage insurance premium requirement.
 - VA rules limit the amount you can be charged for closing costs.
 - Closing costs may be paid by the seller.
 - The lender can't charge you a penalty fee if you pay the loan off early.
 - VA may be able to provide you some assistance if you run into difficulty making payments.
- You should also know that:
- You don't have to be a first-time homebuyer.
 - You can reuse the benefit.
 - VA-backed loans are assumable, as long as the person assuming the loan qualifies

Eligibility

Applicants must have suitable credit, sufficient income, and a valid Certificate of Eligibility (COE) to be eligible for a VA-guaranteed home loan. The home must be for your own personal occupancy. The eligibility requirements to obtain a COE are listed below for Servicemembers and Veterans, spouses, and other eligible beneficiaries.

VA home loans can be used to:

- Buy a home, a condominium unit in a VA-approved project
- Build a home
- Simultaneously purchase and improve a home
- Improve a home by installing energy-related features or making energy efficient improvements
- Buy a manufactured home and/or lot.

Eligibility Requirements for VA Home Loans

Servicemembers and Veterans must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and meet the service requirements. Eligibility can vary depending length of service and period of service.



For more information contact Blue Earth County Veterans Services at 304-4246.

SERVING YOU



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387-2408 (H) / 382-1374 (C)
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Brad Peterson, Sheriff
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304-4800
brad.peterson@blueearthcountymn.gov



**Ross Arneson,
County Attorney**
Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4600



**Bob Meyer,
County Administrator**
Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
204 S. Fifth St.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4235
bob.meyer@blueearthcountymn.gov

Board Information

The Blue Earth County Board generally meets every other Tuesday in the Boardroom at the Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse, 204 South Fifth Street, Mankato. For more information and specific meeting dates and times visit:

www.blueearthcountymn.gov/board

Citizens who wish to address the Board of Commissioners at a meeting must contact Administration at 304-4284 before noon Thursday preceding the Board meeting. This is needed to manage the Board's schedule. The Board will not take action at the time of the presentation, but will direct County staff to respond appropriately to issues raised by citizens.

Write Now!

Write & Tell Us What You Think.

The Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners and other officials are committed to providing quality service to our residents. Responding to your concerns and needs is a priority.

Please fill out the information below and leave it with a receptionist at any County office, or mail it at your convenience to:

Blue Earth County Public Information
P.O. Box 8608
Mankato, MN 56002-8608
or email info@blueearthcountymn.gov

With which County department did you have contact?

Please Evaluate: Excellent Good Poor

Courtesy of employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Timeliness of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value of service provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I would like County officials to know:

I have a suggestion:

If you want us to respond to your comments:

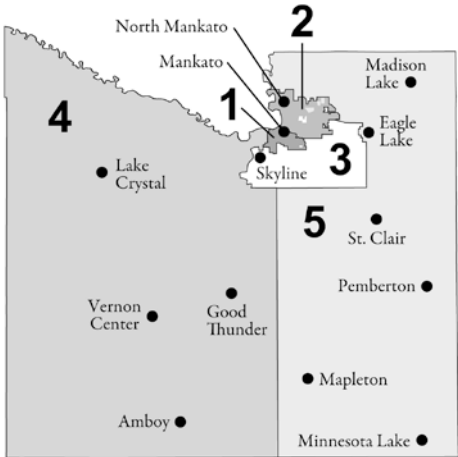
Name:

Address:

Daytime Phone:

**Thank you for your feedback.
We appreciate your comments so
we can serve you better!**

Blue Earth County COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS



SERVICE DIRECTORY



**Blue Earth County
Justice Center**
401 Carver Rd., Mankato



**Blue Earth County
Historic Courthouse**
204 S. Fifth St., Mankato



**County
Government Center**
410 S. Fifth St., Mankato

Probation

1st Floor 304-4750

Restitution/Restorative Justice
Adult & Juvenile Probation, Parole, Supervised
Release and Diversion
Pre-trial Services/Bail Evaluation
Community Work Service Programs

County Sheriff /Emergency Services

1st Floor 304-4800

Burning Permits
Civil Process Office
Request a Crime Report
Report a Crime

5th Judicial District Court

2nd Floor 304-4650

Traffic Tickets
Small Claims Court
Civil and Criminal Court

County Attorney

2nd Floor 304-4600



**Public Works
Department**
35 Map Dr., Mankato

Roads & Bridges 304-4025

Road/Bridge Construction & Inspection
Permits: Driveway, Overweight/Size Loads, Utility
Culvert Sales
Swing-away Mailbox Mounts
Calcium Chloride for Dust Control
Park & Trail System 304-4025
Camping & Shelter Reservations
Firewood Sales & Boat Rental
Agricultural Inspection 304-4025
Weed Control & Seed Testing

Facilities and Management

Lower Level 304-4249

Finance

Lower Level 304-4182

Taxpayer Services – Property Information/Passports

1st Floor 304-4251

Property Assessment & Tax Collection
Abstracts/Certificates for Registered Land
Mapping
Ditch Management
Passports

Administration

2nd Floor 304-4150

Human Resources 304-4288
Public Information 304-4491

U of M Extension

3rd Floor 304-4325

Agriculture 304-4143
4-H/Youth Development 304-4142
Horticulture 304-4146
Misc. Program Areas 304-4326
Nutrition Education Program 304-4141



**Blue Earth County
Library**
100 E. Main St., Mankato

General Services 304-4001
Children's & Young Adult Services 304-4020
Adult & Reference Services 304-4022
Fines & Renewals 304-4010
Meeting Room Reservations 304-4002
Administration 304-4002
Mapleton Public Library 524-3513
Lake Crystal Public Library 726-2726

Taxpayer Services – License Center/Elections

Lower Level 304-4340

Driver's Licenses
Motor Vehicle/Boat Registration
Fishing/Hunting Licenses
Birth/Death Certificates
Marriage Licenses
Voter Registration/Absentee Ballots
Filing of Notaries

Veterans Services

Lower Level 304-4246

Federal & State Benefits
Transportation to VA Hospital

Information Technology

Lower Level 304-4204

Human Services

1st/2nd/3rd Floors

Main Line 304-4222
Financial Assistance 304-4335
Social Services 304-4319
Community Health 304-4319
Mental Health Center 304-4319
Child Protection/Intake 304-4444
Child Support 304-4166

Environmental Services

3rd Floor 304-4381

Planning & Zoning
Building & Feedlot Permits
Shorelands/Flood Plains
Water Wells/Septic Systems/Wetlands
Recycling Center/Compost Site/Landfill
Household Hazardous Waste Center
911/Rural Addressing

Serving Citizens Through County Government

Other County Facilities/Numbers

Household Hazardous Waste Facility
651 Summit Ave., Mankato, 304-4242

Ponderosa Landfill
20028 Gooseberry Lane, Mankato, 625-7301

Recycling Center
741 Waseca Ave., LeHillier, 345-4255

24-Hour Waste and Recycling Hotline, 304-4242
County TTY/TDD (Hearing Impaired), 304-4399



**BLUE EARTH
COUNTY**

visit us online:
www.blueearthcountymn.gov